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ABSTRACT

Project CHIME (Children with Hearing Impairments in Mainstreamed Environments) was created to develop and implement strategies that promote effective mainstreaming of preschool hearing-impaired children, aged 2-5. This guide reviews issues that should be addressed before beginning a mainstreamed program, such as: funding; advance planning; staffing; philosophy; informing parents; establishing eligibility criteria; selecting a site; training staff and parents; scheduling the mainstreaming experience; and determining what services will be provided, such as an auditory trainer, speech therapist, psychologist, etc. Materials appended to the guidebook include a trouble shooting checklist on caring for hearing aids, a preschool classroom observation form, a worksheet for evaluating hearing-impaired preschool interaction, and a parent survey. (JDD)

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PROJECT CHIME

A Guide to Developing a Mainstreaming Program

for Preschool Children who are Hearing Impaired

DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
Program for the Hearing Impaired

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INTRODUCTION

Project CHIME (Children with Hearing Impairments in Mainstreamed Environments) was created by Nassau BOCES Program for the Hearing Impaired to develop and implement strategies that promote effective mainstreaming of those preschool hearing-impaired children, ages two to five years, who could benefit from this experience. The project was funded through a federal grant from the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program, United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

The development of this project was based on the belief that some very young children with hearing impairments will develop to their potential more readily if given opportunities that allow them to learn and play while interacting with hearing peers. Mainstreaming preschoolers, especially in structured settings, aids in their language development, provides important peer models, and helps hearing-impaired children develop cognitive and social skills. Providing these opportunities at the earliest possible age will help their growth and development in the hearing world.

Project CHIME was designed to provide a mainstream experience for some of the prechoolers who were attending Nassau BOCES Prechool Program for the Hearing Impaired. The basic design of the model included the mainstreaming of a hearing-impaired child in a regular nursery or preschool program near the child's home for two or more morning sessions per week. A typical session lasted from one-and-one-half hours to three hours depending upon the needs and abilities of the child. The rest of the student's school day was spent at the BOCES program.

Project CHIME's many services included training for the staff of the nursery and preschools participating in the program and training and education for parents of the children involved in the project. All the resources of the Nassau BOCES Program for the Hearing Impaired, including the professional staff, audiological testing services, extensive technological equipment, and ancillary and suport staff, who provide psychological counseling and speech and language therapy, were available to Project CHIME.

This quide was written for school systems and other agencies involved in the education of hearing impaired preschool children and committed to the belief that educational intervention for young children with handicaps should begin as early as possible. The information in the guide follows planning and implementation procedures used by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of Nassau County, Long Island, New York.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Once the professional is convinced of the need for a program that includes the option of mainstreaming experiences for hearing-impaired preschoolers, there are a number of issues that should be addressed.

Funding...

Being able to fund a program must be considered a key priority. Before beginning a program, your source of funding should be secure. Whether the source is federal, state, or local, the amount of money available and the time boundaries of the funding must be clear. It is unwise to depend upon any funding sources that are not in place at the start of the program, i.e. private grants or donations. Unfortunately the success of the project does not guarantee continued funding.

As programs succeed, they tend to grow and as they grow, more dollars are needed. It would be, therefore, a wise idea to develop plans for additional funding as the program grows. Funding sources and plans should be consistently reviewed to be kept current. Contacting new and possible funding sources must be an ongoing process throughout the development of the project.

Keeping current on the development of funding sources combined with efforts to integrate the project into a program as part of the agency's ongoing services will ensure the continuity of a successful project.

Advance Planning...

Contacting local medical and social service faciltities that are involved with speech and hearing clinics is important at the beginning of a mainstreaming project. They will want to know about your project, how it will work and who it will serve.

Of course, the parents of children who may be eligible for the project should know as much about it as you can tell them at the start. It would also be helpful to let the preschool programs in your community know about your project. One or more of them might become maintreaming sites. Informing the community-at-large may also bring you potential mainstreaming sites.

Great emphasis should be placed at the start of the project and indeed throughout its existence on encouraging educational preschool professionals to be receptive to the acceptance the hearing-imapired child into their regular classrooms. You will need to develop the ability to assess early on whether they will work cooperatively with you to promote the best interests of the child.

The success of the project will greatly depend upon the support of the educational professionals and the parents as it develops. The support of both these groups will help in the overall goal of preparing the hearing-impaired to live successfully in the hearing world.

Notifying the professional and educational communities of your project can also develop future referrals for the mainstreaming program and indeed, may bring more students to your total program.

ORGANIZING THE PROJECT

Once the decision has been made to offer a program that provides mainstreaming opportunities for hearing-impaired preschool children, there are many organizational procedures that must be addressed.

Staffing...

Choosing staff for the project is a most important step. The developers of the project are usually an administrative team. Now that the project is ready to become viable, that team will need staff members who are skilled in the field of educating the hearing impaired and who possess a degree of creative and innovative ability. The project coordinator should possess some administrative experience.

Basically, the Project CHIME staff consisted of a project coordinator, teacher-trainer, and a part-time psychologist and audiologist. Other support staff including administration was provided by the Nassau BOCES Program for the Hearing Impaired and the Division of Special Education.

Establishing a Philosophy...

All staff involved in the project should accept the basic philosophical approach underlying the importance of providing mainstreaming options for some hearing-impaired children. The CHIME staff and indeed, once the program started, the mainstream teachers and the parents of the children participating agreed that preschool hearing-impaired children had much to gain from interacting with their hearing peers.

Remember, all young children learn through copying and imitating. However, this process is limited for the young hearing-impaired child by his or her handicap. Exposure to normal speech and language is, therefore, very important for this child. And it is especially desirous that some of this exposure involve learning with the child's hearing peers in a natural environment. Mainstreaming in an age-appropriate environment encourages the proccesses of learning and socializiation for the hearing-impaired child who is capable of participating in this experience.

Timing for the Project...

Timing is critical in the learning process of the very young child. Providing a natural environment with normal speech and language at the time when the hearing-impaired child is developing these skills can be most important in the acquisition of receptive and expressive language. For most children, this will be when they are three to four years old.

It is important to note that in making decisions concerning the participation of children in CHIME, the question of two-year old hearing impaired youngsters arose. The staff of the CHIME program recommended that children of this age should not be selected for the project. They found that two-year-olds are generally developmentally egocentric in their activities and, therefore, are not prime candidates for the mainstreaming experience. Many two-year-olds are overwhelmed by too many different situations and depend upon greater consistency to establish relationships with teachers and peers.

There were so many unanswered pertaining to the rate of the two-year-olds speech and language acquisition especially for those that were recently admitted to the Nassau BOCES Program for the Hearing Impaired. In general, the speech and language opportunities offered through the appropriate structured activities of a nursery school setting, are not as beneficial for a two-year old as they are for a youngster who is three or older.

Once mainstream teachers and parents have been trained to make the mainstreaming experience beneficial, hearing-impaired preschoolers who are three and four years old and who meet the eligibility criteria will benefit from the opportunity to learn side-by-side with their hearing peers.

Informing Parents...

To inform parents of the students in the Nassau BOCES programs that mainstreaming opportunities were being offered through CHIME, a brochure describing the project, its goals, and the criteria for eligibility was distributed. The project was also highlighted in the Program for the Hearing Impaired PTA newsletter. Interested parents then contacted the program requesting that their children be considered for the project.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

With the benefits of mainstreaming a hearing impaired child accepted, criteria for determining those children who would participate in the program were established.

Initial Criteria...

Several preliminary prerequisites for participation in the project were established. These included

1. enrollment in the Infant or Preschool Program of the Nassau BOCES Program for the Hearing Impaired - all students were initially considered eligible

2. approval by parents for students' participation in the project

3. current medical and audiological testing records

4. the wearing of hearing aids by students full-time (children with new hearing aids were given one month's acclimation period prior to being considered eligible

Individual Criteria...

Once a child met these preliminary requirements and was considered a possible candidate for the program, he or she was

1. assessed for intelligibility of speech as related to severity of hearing loss and the ability to use residual hearing to its maximum

2. screened for an evaluation by a team consisting of the project coordinator, teacher trainer, audiologist, psychologist, and the classroom teacher

3. given the TAC (Test of Auditory Comprehension),the LAP (Learning Accomplishment Profile), the Ski-Hi Receptive Language Test, and the Preschool Behavior checklist designed by the Project CHIME staff

The student is tested for cognitive ability, levels of receptive and expressive language, social and emotional adjustment, appropriate school behavior and level of self-help skills. This individual assessment and testing provided the means of determining whether a child was ready for the mainstreaming experience.

SELECTING A MAINSTREAM SITE

The Role of the Parent...

Interested parents whose children were eligible for the project visited three nursery schools of their own choosing. As they visited the programs, they informed the schools of their child's handicapping condition. They then selected two schools that were amenable to serving their child and where they felt most comfortable.

After the choice of a mainstream preschool program for the child was made following a visit by the Project CHIME coordinator, the parents assumed the responsibility of processing an application for the program.

The Role of the Coordinator

Once the parents had notified the coordinator of their choice of two preschools, he arranged to visit them. He met and interviewed the teachers who would be accepting the mainstreamed child. He also checked the schools' environments using the Preschool Classroom Observation (see Appendix) to assure that the most important aspects of a nursery school setting would be met for the hearing impaired.

Selection Criteria...

Criteria for selecting mainstreamed sites included the following

1. the school must be state licensed

2. teacher(s) must be certified

3. school and teacher should be willing to perform all activities as requested by the Project CHIME staff

4. teacher/pupil ratio should not exceed 15:1

5. compatability between administration and staff of the mainstreamed site

6. school should be located in student's community

7. the physical setup and acoustics of the room should be conducive to the needs of the hearing-impaired child

If the programs selected by the parents met these criteria, the coordinator and the parents mutually chose the one that was determined to be the best for the child. If the programs did not meet these criteria, parents could begin the process again by visiting additional programs.

TRAINING

After the selection of the best site was made the parents and the coordinator, he informed the Project CHIME staff. The next step involved training for mainstream staff and parents.

Training of the Mainstream Staff...

As soon as possible the training of the mainstream teacher began. He or she was given basic information about hearing loss and how to work with a hearing impaired child. The philosophy of the benefits of interaction with hearing peers was explained and discussion on the acquisition of speech and language for the hearing impaired child included.

Instruction in the importance of auditory trainers and how to use them was a most important part of the training. Most mainstream teachers visited the Nassau BOCES Program for the Hearing Impaired to learn about the preschool program that the child attended and the specialized equipment that is used by this program.

Teachers were familiarized with materials that were used by the coordinator on visits to their schools, including the "Worksheet for Hearing Impaired Preschool Interaction (WHIPI - see Appendix).

When a child was placed, the coordinator visited the mainstream program once a week. During this visit progress was assessed and any problems that might have occured were resolved. Later it was necessary to make these visits on a monthly basis.

Parent Training...

Parent training also began as soon as the decision was made to mainstream a child. Parents concerns and fears were addressed at the start through a pre-program Parent Questionnaire. A post-program questionnaire followed the mainstreaming experience. Parent meetings were formally scheduled on a monthly basis (see Appendix - Parent Workshop Topics). The coordinator was available to parents and teachers on a daily basis.

THE CHIME PROGRAM

In addition to placing the child in a mainstream site and providing training for staff and parents, there were several other important issues including scheduling and direct services that had to be considered.

Scheduling for the mainstreaming experience...

Children attend school in Nassau BOCES Preschool Program for the Hearing Impaired throught the entire calendar year including the regular September to June school year and an extended-year summer program of six weeks duration. For children who were not ready to begin the mainstreaming experience in September, the program was designed to begin at any time during the school year.

Children who participated in the CHIME program, attended the BOCES preschool program for at least two complete days each week. This was mandatory. The scheduling of time spent at the mainstream site varied according to individual situations. Most students were mainstreamed for two or three morning sessions each week. Parents were responsible for transportation to the mainstream site but in some cases, adaptations for the transportation situation were made.

Project Services...

The services provided by CHIME included those for the hearing-impaired preschooler, his or her parents, and the mainstream teachers. All services were designed to assure that children participating would have a normal school experience. They included

1. use of an auditory trainer for the student both at the BOCES and the mainstream program

2. speech therapy and language skill development for the student

3. audiological and psychological services for the student

4. training for teachers at the mainstream site to sensitize them to needs of the hearing impaired and to provide them with strategies and intervention that can be used with the mainstreamed preschooler

5. training for parents beginning at the start of the school year that included explanation of the grant, its purposes and goals, and exploration of topics such as parent fears, expectations, and understanding of issues involved in hearing loss, education for the hearing impaired and mainstreaming

Any decision to replicate this program should be based upon the ability to provide most of these services.

GOALS

When the CHIME project was organized, clear cut goals were developed. They became the guidelines for the project and measurements of its accomplishments. Of course, they were subject to adaptations as the experience of the project demanded. While it is important to develop goals at the start of a project, it is important to be flexible in redefining those goals if needed.

The goals of Project CHIME included

. development of a model program and effective techniques that could be used for hearing-impaired preschool children in mainstream environments

. development of criteria for choosing mainstream sites

. establishment of linkages between specialized programs for hearing-impaired preschool children and neighborhood nursery schools and day-care centers

. establishment of demonstration sites where the model program could be tested

. creation of training sites where staffs of neighborhood nursery schools or day-care centers could be taught how to work with hearing-impaired children

. development of an adapted curriculum and supplementary teaching materials that could be used with mainstreamed hearing-impaired preschool children

. promotion of the use of specialized equipment, such as auditory trainers, for hearing-impaired preschoolers

. development of criteria to determine readiness of hearing-impaired preschoolers for placement in mainstreamed environments

All these goals were met during the operation of the CHIME project. Most have been covered in the discussion in this guide. An additional comment should be included on the CHIME curriculum. The material developed by Project CHIME offers well-planned preschool activities for 25 weeks that are particularly designed to promote language acquisition for the hearing-impaired child but can be beneficially used with all children .

It also should be noted that not every child placed through Project CHIME succeeded in the mainstream experience. Although every effort was made to assess the readiness of the child and to assure that he or she would profit from mainstreaming, some children found the experience too stressful. They developed changes in behavior that was considered negative rather than the positive response that was expected.

Project CHIME maintained a flexible attitude towards withdrawing the child if indeed a problem developed. Sometimes mainstreaming was delayed for several months while the child matured and in other cases, the recommendation that a child participate in mainstreaming was recinded when it proved a unsuccessful experience.

CONCLUSION

The information is this booklet is intended to serve only as a guide. Project CHIME found that each early-childhood education program that promotes mainstreaming for hearing-impaired preschool children will take on its own identity. This happens through the interaction of the staff, parents and other programs that become involved.

Project CHIME was successful because of a competent and caring staff, well-trained mainstream teachers and well-prepared mainstream environments, the participation of interested parents and the support of the Nassau BOCES board, the Division of Special Education administrators, and in fact, all agency personnel who worked with the program.

Most of all Project CHIME was successful because throughout the existance of the program for its inception to the conclusion of the three-year grant, the success of the children that it served was the best reward for everyone involved in developing and running the program.

This Guide to developing a Program Promoting Mainstreaming for Hearing Impaired Children was developed by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) of Nassau County as part of a federal grant No. G008401386 from the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program funded through the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Special Education Programs.

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HOW TO CARE FOR THE HEARING AID

TROUBLE SHOOTING CHECKLIST

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSES	POSSIBLE CURES
No sound	Is on/off switch on?	Some switches operate with volume control; some aids have separate switches; some operate by opening and closing battery compartment.
	Is battery OK?	Is battery present; proper voltage; proper polarity, + and - orientation in the battery compartment.
	Is aid on "T"?	Telephone attachment bypasses microphone and detects electro-magnetic signals only.
	Is wire cord broken? (body aid only)	May not be apparent, since break occurs under insulation sheath. Try a new cord.
	Plastic tubing crimped shut?	This may block or severely reduce sound transmission.
	Cause not known	Return to dealer or factory.
Intermittant Sound	Short circuit in cord or volume control. (Body Aid)	Manipulate cord. If intermittent, replace; manipulate volume control, if intermittent, return to dealer or factory.
	Poor battery control?	Re-align contacts.
Poor Sound Quality	Weak battery	Replace
	Is moisture or debris on diaphragm or microphone receiver?	Clean and dry diaphragms: if no better return for repairs. Check electro-acoustic analysis results.
	Receiver malfunction	Replace
	Microphone or circuitry malfunction	Return to dealer or factory
	Unknown cause	Return to dealer or factory
	Poor fitting earmold? Increase middle ear impedence due to fluid and/or negative pressure	Check sealing of mold; new ear mold; otologic examination

Project CHIME

Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County

Program for the Hearing Impaired

PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

_____ Psychologist _____ Coordinator

School _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

Do not write in this area

1, 2
3, 4
5, 6, 7, 8
9

Preliminary

_____State licensed school

_____Certified teachers

_____Teacher student ratio_____

_____Availability of supervisory services for teachers

_____Geographic distance from student's home

_____Willingness of staff/administration to work with hearing-impaired students

_____Willingness of staff/administration to participate in in-service training

Environmental aspects of classroom

Room size ( ) Small ( ) Medium ( ) Large ( ) Other 10

Capacity ( ) Crowded ( ) Not crowded ( ) Other 11

Type seating ( ) Desks ( ) Tables (type _____) ( ) Other 12

Lighting ( ) Windows ( ) Shades ( ) Bright ( ) Dim ( ) Other 13

Floor surface ( ) Carpeted ( ) Wood ( ) Tile ( ) Other 14

Wall treatment ( ) Sparse ( ) Adequate ( ) Distracting 15

Outdoor facilities ( ) Playground ( ) Other ( ) None 16

Noise level ( ) Loud ( ) Average ( ) Quiet ( ) Other 17

Interfering room noises (fan, heater, fish tank) _____ 18

Ventilation ( ) Adequate ( ) Inadequate 19

Project CHIME

Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County

Program for the Hearing Impaired

WORKSHEET FOR HEARING IMPAIRED PRESCHOOL INTERACTION (WHIPI)

_____ Psychologist _____ Coordinator

Student _____ Date _____

School _____ Observer _____

Time of Observation _____ to _____ Activity _____

Do not write in this area

1___ 2___
3___ 4___ 5___
6___ 7___ 8___
9___ 10___
11___ 12___
13___ 14___
15___

Indicate number of times behavior occurs during observation (e.g. ~~IIIII III~~)

I. POSITIVE PEER INTERACTION

_____Moves towards and stands or sits near peer (s) 16___

_____Touches peer 17___

_____Calls to peer 18___

_____Indicates non-verbal interaction with peers (gestures) 19___

_____Initiates conversation 20___

_____Seeks information from peer 21___

_____Seeks help with equipment of clothing from peer 22___

_____Leads peer activity 23___

_____Follows lead of peer 24___

_____Follows (but modifies) lead of peer 25___

_____ Refuses to follow peer's directions 26___

_____Laughs or smiles with peer 27__

_____Expresses physical affection towards peer 28___

_____Offers help or expresses concern towards peer 29___

_____Shares with peer 30___

_____Shows pride in product to peer 31__

_____Reacts appropriately to classmates questions 32__

_____Other _____ 33___ 34__

Student _____ Page 2

Do not write in this space

II. NEGATIVE PEER INTERACTION

_____ Agressive (or hostile) non-verbal behavior 35___

_____ Agressive (or hostile) verbal behvior 36___

_____ Fooling around behavior/seeks negative attention 37___

_____ Interrupts peer's conversation 38___

_____ Interrupts peer's play 39___

_____ Takes toys materials belonging to others 40___

_____ Tattles or complains about others 41___

_____ Bossy, takes over 42___

_____ Competes for adult attention 43___

_____ Easily frustrated with peers 44___

_____ Ignores other children 45___

_____ Tries to interact, but not accepted by peers 46___

_____ Interacts with others only when encouraged by adult 47___

_____ Other _____ 48___ 49___

III. PLAY OBSERVATION

_____ Unoccupied play behavior (watching, self stimulatory; toys not the focus) 50___

_____ Solitary independent play (plays alone) 51___

_____ Onlooker (watches other children play) 52___

_____ Parallel play (plays independently beside other children) 53___

_____ Associate play (plays with other children) 54___

_____ Cooperative play (organizes play with common goal) 55___

_____ Appropriate simple play (exploration, shows interest) 56___

_____ Appropriate play (constructive use of objects) 57___

_____ Appropriate play (includes higher level pretend play) 58___

_____ Inappropriate play (repetitive or nonconstructive) 60___ 59___

_____ Other _____ 61___

Project CHIME

Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County

Program for the Hearing Impaired

PARENT WORKSHOPS

DATE	TOPIC
October 22	Audiological Issues: Audiograms, Auditory Trainers, Cochlear Implants
November 19	Considerations in Mainstreaming
December 17	Language Stimulation at Home
January 14	Language Expansion
February 11	Early Elementary Academic Skills
March 18	Methodological Differences in Working with the Hearing Impaired
April 22	Toys, Books, and Educational Materials
May 20	What Lies Ahead?

Project CHIME

Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County

Program for the Hearing Impaired

PARENT SURVEY

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
1. My child will benefit from mainstreaming					
2. Mainstreaming will enhance my child's development in:					
a. Language (communication					
b. Socialization					
c. Speech					
d. Cognitive development					
e. Self-help skills					
f. Emotional growth					
3. My child feels comfortable with					
a. hearing-impaired peers					
b. hearing peers					
4. I am nervous about					
a. people understanding my child's speech					
b. my child's hearing aid malfunctioning					
c. my child's participation in language-based activities (show and tell, role playing, story telling)					
d. hearing children interacting with my child					
e. parents of hearing children supporting the concept of mainstreaming					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
5. My child's current special.needs, i.e. auditory training, speech, language will be most effectively met in a					
a. totally-mainstreamed program					
b. partially-mainstreamed program					
c. total program for the hearing impaired					
6. I expect my child to eventually be fully mainstreamed					
7. Some educators feel that mainstreaming is done to please parents. How do you feel about that statement?					
8. Some physicians say that special education is detrimental to a hearing-impaired child's education. How do you feel?					

Parents Name _____

Student's Name _____

Date _____

60___

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